

What Is Claimed Is:

1. Suture placer apparatus for placing a length of suture wire through tissue whereby the length of suture wire may thereafter be used to approximate and tension the tissue, said suture placer apparatus comprising:

a shaft having a proximal end and a distal end, and a lumen extending through said shaft and sized to closely receive the suture wire for supported passage therethrough, said lumen exiting said shaft at hole at said distal end of said shaft; and

a deflection die located adjacent to said hole for engagement by a suture wire passing through said lumen, whereby the trajectory of the suture wire will be changed by said deflection die.

2. A suture placer apparatus according to claim 1 wherein said deflection die is substantially planar.

3. A suture placer apparatus according to claim 1 wherein said deflection die has a radius of curvature.

4. Suture placer apparatus according to claim 1 wherein said shaft is adapted to pierce tissue so that said hole may be positioned intermediate the tissue.

5. Suture placer apparatus according to claim 1 wherein said apparatus further comprises a length of suture wire disposed in said lumen.

6. A method for approximating and tensioning tissue, comprising:

providing suture placer apparatus comprising:

a shaft having a proximal end and a distal end, and a lumen extending through said shaft and sized to closely receive the suture wire for supported passage therethrough, said lumen exiting said shaft at a hole at said distal end of said shaft; and

a deflection die located adjacent to said hole for engagement by a suture wire passing through said lumen, whereby the trajectory of the suture wire will be changed by said deflection die;

positioning said suture placer apparatus so that suture wire exiting said hole will penetrate said tissue; and

advancing a length of suture wire through said lumen so that the suture wire engages said deflection die and is passed through said tissue.